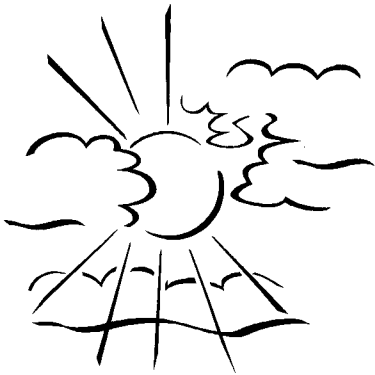


***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Thursday, August 25, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Michigan Report

August 25, 2005

## **PROGRESS REPORTED IN BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Top state officials meeting Thursday on the 2005-06 budget made some of the greatest progress they have to date both on setting targets and agreeing to a deadline for the budget to be completed, sources said.

The officials, who included Budget Director Mary Lannoye, House Speaker Craig DeRoche (R-Novi), Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) and Senate Appropriations Chair Sen. Shirley Johnson (R-Troy), will meet again on Monday.

House Appropriations Chair Scott Hummel (R-DeWitt) is still in Israel on a legislative trip.

No official comment on the meeting was made, but sources close to the talks characterized the discussions as the most fruitful of those held thus far.

The officials have agreed to tentative budget targets for two-thirds of the state departments, the sources said, although those numbers remain fluid as agreements continued to be worked on.

The officials also discussed a deadline by which the Legislature would complete work on the budget – the fiscal year will end September 30 – but a final date still has not been set.

# Governor Granholm's Weekly Radio Address Highlights Commitment to Protecting Children

*August 26, 2005*

LANSING – In her weekly radio address, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today highlighted a variety of steps her administration has taken to protect children.

"Whether it's a big goal, like giving every child the opportunity to go to college, or something more basic, like keeping them safe, children are the focus of state government every single day," Granholm said. "We don't always agree in Lansing, but we can agree on common sense ideas to protect our kids – like making sure that sex offenders can't be within a certain distance of a school, or requiring daycare centers to run criminal background checks on their staff."

In May, Granholm asked state lawmakers to pass a series of bills to keep children safe from sexual predators by closing critical safety loopholes. This past week, the State House held hearings on some of the legislation called for by the Governor, and she applauded state lawmakers for their efforts.

This summer, Michigan was one of the first states in the country to join a nationwide effort to track felons who've been convicted of sex crimes. Last month, the state established an Internet "do-not-call" list for parents who want to keep inappropriate material away from their kids' email inboxes.

"As kids go back to school this fall, I hope to sign legislation that makes Michigan, more than ever before, a safe place – in fact, the safest place in the nation – for families to live and for children to learn," Granholm added.

The Governor's weekly address is released each Friday at 10:00 a.m. and may be heard on broadcast stations across the state through an affiliation with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. The address will also be available on the Governor's Website on Mondays as a podcast for general distribution to personal MP3 players and home computers.

###

Broadcasters Note: Governor Granholm's radio address can be accessed through Sunday evening exclusively through the Members Only Page of the Michigan Association of Broadcasters website: [www.michmab.com](http://www.michmab.com).

Publishers Note: The text of today's address is attached.

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GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

Radio Address – Protect legislation

Record Date: August 25, 2005

Release Date: August 26, 2005

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

This past week, while parents across Michigan focused on getting their kids ready for school, talk in the Capitol focused on making sure that state government is doing everything it can to protect our children, no matter where they are.

Whether it's a big goal, like giving every child the opportunity to go to college, or something more basic, like keeping them safe, children are the focus of state government every single day.

That's why I asked the Legislature in May to pass a series of bills to keep our children safe from sexual predators.

This past week, the State House held hearings on some of the legislation I called for – and I applaud them for it, because this is such an important issue to all of us.

Now...we don't always agree in Lansing, but we can agree on common sense ideas to protect our kids – like making sure that sex offenders can't be within a certain distance of a school, or requiring daycare centers to run criminal background checks on their staff.

The legislation I called for closes critical safety loopholes. First, it makes it illegal for sex offenders to be within 1,000 feet of a school.

Second, it bars a convicted sex offender from working in a youth sports league, a day care center, a school, or from volunteering at an after school program.

My hat is off to the incredible men and women in Michigan who've dedicated their lives to teaching and caring for our children. They do a remarkable job. At the state level, we have to mirror their dedication to keeping our children safe.

This summer, we were one of the first states in the country to join a nationwide effort to track felons who've been convicted of sex crimes. And this year, we became one of the first states to create a sort of Internet "do-not-call" list for parents who want to keep inappropriate material away from their kids' email inboxes.

These are important measures to protect children, but we have to do more. So as kids go back to school this fall, I hope to sign legislation that makes Michigan, more than ever before, a safe place – in fact, the safest place in the nation – for families to live and for children to learn.

Thank you for listening.

# Teen charged in death of 2-year-old

Friday, August 26, 2005

By Ed Ronco

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- The beating that police say killed a 2-year-old boy was so extreme, a neighbor said it shook the pictures on her apartment wall.

"Boom. Boom. Boom," said Joy Robinson, pounding her fist into her hand to describe the noise. Police said they arrested the 17-year-old boyfriend of the boy's mother after he admitted using his hands and a belt to spank the boy Wednesday in their Northeast Side apartment.

Lee Clifton Moore was to be arraigned today in Grand Rapids District Court on a charge of felony murder in the death of Armon Colar.

"He does admit, in his eyes, to disciplining" the boy, Grand Rapids Police Capt. Jeff Hertel said today.

Moore, who will turn 18 next week, lived with the 23-year-old mother and her three children in an apartment at 1923 Bradford St. NE, police said.

He was babysitting the children Wednesday while the mother and the children's grandmother went back-to-school shopping, Hertel said.

He called the mother, telling her something was wrong with Armon, Hertel said. When returned, she found Armon unresponsive and drove him to the emergency room, police said.

Emergency room staff called police after suspecting abuse.

Armon died Thursday at Spectrum Health Butterworth Campus. An autopsy was planned for today.

Robinson said she heard the man next door shouting expletives and a baby crying Wednesday, and initially thought the child's mother and her boyfriend were arguing.

The wall that separates her townhouse in the 1900 block of Bradford from the one next door shook so hard that it jostled photos hanging along her staircase, she said.

"I've never heard a noise like that in my life," said Robinson, a mother of six and grandmother of eight.

Some time later, she said Armon's two young sisters asked to borrow her phone to call their mother.

"Those girls were frightened," she said. "She pulled straight up, the mom, and dragged the baby out of the house."

The child's mother and her family could not be reached for comment.

Outside the townhouse where Armon died, friends draped the door and a front window with balloons. Stuffed animals sat on the stoop and a red sign called the boy an "angel from God."

This is the second homicide of a Grand Rapids toddler in five weeks.

Aiyana Cisneros, 2, died July 19 in her mother's Northeast Side home. Detectives have interviewed her mother and her mother's boyfriend, both 20, but no one has been charged. Both were home when Aiyana died, police said.

On Thursday, Robinson sat on her couch in tears, wishing she'd called police or gone over to see what was happening.

"I wish I could bring back what happened (Wednesday)," she said. "Hearing that baby holler, it didn't make any sense."

The night before the alleged beating, neighbor Carol Nichols said she watched as a young man appeared to play roughly with the little boy in the back yard. He swung him in circles "very swiftly" by the arms until the boy screamed, she said.

Then, the young man marched the boy around the yard like a soldier, ordering him around with grunts like a drill sergeant. "He (the boy) walked like he was a zombie," she said. "He didn't act like he was coherent. I thought, 'What is going to happen next?'"

At one point, the man kicked an empty jug at the boy, just missing him, she said.

Nichols, 66, said she called an after-hours hotline for Kent County's Children's Protective Services to complain that the man was abusing the boy. Despite repeated calls, she said, she couldn't get through.

Nichols said she eventually called 211 -- a local line set up to reach community resources -- where an operator gave her a number for a statewide after-hours crisis line for protective services. An operator there told her to call the local office the next morning, she said.

She was told by the 211 operator she could call 911 to report the incident to police, she said.

"I didn't think it was that serious," she said. "I didn't think the child's life was in danger."

The next morning, Nichols said, she called the local protective services office to report the alleged abuse and complain about the hotline, she said.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call Grand Rapids police at 456-3604 or the Silent Observer tip line at 774-2345. Anonymous tips also can be left at the Silent Observer Web site, [silentobserver.org](http://silentobserver.org)

# Repeat sex offender given 15-years

Thursday, August 25, 2005 10:38 AM EDT

**Judge calls Jeremiah Dean Rogers a danger to society.**

By Dennis Pelham

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN - A second child sex abuse conviction earned a former Hillsdale County man up to 15 years in prison Wednesday.

Jeremiah Dean Rogers, 24, was given an eight-year and four-month to 15-year sentence in Lenawee County Circuit Court where Judge Harvey A. Koselka called him a danger to society.

Rogers objected earlier in the hearing to a probation officer's statement in a sentencing recommendation that he is a danger to society. He also denied sexually abusing a child of an Adrian family he befriended last year.

"I didn't do nothing," Rogers told the court, adding he attempted suicide because of his anguish over the accusations.

Rogers pleaded guilty in June to a reduced second-degree criminal sexual conduct count. Two first-degree counts carrying maximum life sentences were dismissed.

The mother of the victim asked the court Wednesday to give Rogers a longer prison term than he received for a previous child sex abuse conviction in Hillsdale County.

He served five years of a two- to five-year prison term he was given in 1998 for an attempted first-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction. He was discharged from prison in 2003.

"I would like to see him punished more harshly this time," the woman said. "I think he has shown he will cause more harm and hurt more young children if allowed out on after a short prison term."

She said Rogers befriended her family last year and played Santa Claus at Christmas for her and her husband's five children.

"I deeply regret that I allowed myself to be fooled by this offer of friendship," she said. Her

family was turned upside down, she said, after they discovered their youngest child was being sexually abused.

"It's clear that Jeremiah doesn't have any remorse," she said.

Public defender John Glaser told the court that Rogers disagrees with a statement in his presentence report that he represents a danger to other children.

"He knows he has a problem and hopes he can get some counseling while he's in prison," Glaser said.

Koselka noted that Rogers was discharged from sex offender counseling in the past for failing to attend sessions and has failed at probation following sentencing last year for a sex offender registration violation. He was convicted of failing to report a change of address from Morenci to Jackson in January 2004.

He was given an additional 16-month to two-year prison term Wednesday for violating probation in that case.



# **Police: Girl Fondled By Stranger Near Utica Apartments**

## ***Police Search For Man On Bike***

POSTED: 6:31 pm EDT August 25, 2005

UPDATED: 8:44 am EDT August 26, 2005

UTICA, Mich. -- An 8-year-old girl was fondled by a stranger outside an apartment building on Thursday, according to police.

Police said the incident occurred at about 5 p.m. outside the Utica Plaza apartments near M-59 and M-53 in Utica.

The girl told police that she was playing near the building when a white man, approximately 30 years old, got off of a black mountain bike and approached her.

The man allegedly fondled the girl before leaving the scene on the bike, police said.

"It's ridiculous. I don't see how people can do this to children," said Kim Stoney, the victim's mother.

Stoney said other children who were playing outside saw the man and provided police with a description.

Authorities continue to search for the man, who was said to have a blond or red-colored goatee and was wearing a blue T-shirt and blue jeans.

Stoney cautioned parents to "watch your children. Especially the young girls."

Anyone with information that may lead to an arrest is asked to call the Utica Police Department at (586) 731-2345.

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# **Visteon cuts employees' child care program**

## **Ailing supplier pulls out of highly touted family service centers, leaving Metro families scrambling.**

By Sharon Terlep / The Detroit News

August 25, 2005

Visteon Corp. will cut ties with 30 family and child care centers that the cash-strapped supplier helped create four years ago in Metro Detroit and out-of-state communities, cutting off child care and other services for salaried workers.

The centers, which provide day care, summer camps and a wide range of free classes, were a much-touted joint project unveiled in 2001 between Visteon, Ford Motor Co. and the United Auto Workers.

Starting Jan. 1, Visteon will no longer financially support the 30 centers nationwide, including 10 in Metro Detroit.

"The level of participation did not justify the cost," said Visteon spokesman Jim Fisher. "It's a very small percentage of the U.S. work force that uses them. But for those that do, we recognize this is a hardship."

The cutbacks are the latest sign of diminishing employee benefits as Detroit automakers and parts suppliers lose ground in the global auto industry.

Earlier this year, Visteon slashed health care coverage and life insurance benefits for retired salaried workers.

Automotive suppliers Metaldyne Corp., ArvinMeritor Inc. and Delphi Corp. also have announced plans to reduce or eliminate retiree health benefits.

Fisher said about 80 of Visteon's 8,000 U.S. salaried employees have children enrolled in day care centers across the country.

Visteon's salaried work force will no longer have access to other services provided at the family centers, such as after-school activities for children and classes that range from driver's education, tax planning, parenting techniques and home repair.

Ford has no plans to pull its financial support from the centers, company spokeswoman Marcey Evans said. UAW officials could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

The cost of the centers is shared by the UAW, Ford and Visteon. The union covers about three-fourths of the operating cost, reflecting the proportion of union and salaried workers who use the centers.

The program was praised as an important step toward improving work life for employees. Statues of former UAW President Stephen Yokich, Ford Chairman William Clay Ford Jr. and Visteon CEO Peter Pestillo are displayed outside several of the centers.

Current and retired employees of Ford and Visteon, which was a division of Ford until 2000, and their families and guests are entitled to use the centers.

Most services, such as the library and computers, are free, while fees are charged for child care and some classes.

Up to 1 million people have access to the centers, according to the Family Service & Learning Center Web site.

One veteran employee at Visteon's Ypsilanti plant told The Detroit News he will have to pull his young children out of the day care center at the Pete Pestillo Family Learning Center in Ypsilanti. While he accepted the recent cuts to his 401(k) plan and health care coverage as necessary given Visteon's problems, this move puts him in a "very difficult position." He said he would have been willing to pay more if necessary to keep his kids in what he called an "awesome" day care.

The move comes in the midst of a major overhaul at the nation's second-largest automotive supplier, which is struggling against pricing pressures and low-wage competitors. Visteon reported a \$1.2 billion second-quarter loss earlier this year, which was largely attributed to a \$1.1 billion charge for restructuring.

Visteon recently agreed to shed 15 North American plants, which are being spun into a holding company controlled by Ford. As part of the deal, the companies plan to offer buyout packages to 5,000 Visteon hourly workers.

Fisher said Visteon is directing employees to a child care referral service to help find a new provider. The company gave notice this summer to give workers time to make new arrangements, he said.

"We certainly recognize the impact that this has," he said.

*You can reach Sharon Terlep at (313) 223-4686 or [sterlep@detnews.com](mailto:sterlep@detnews.com).*

## **Regional Jobless Rates Climb In July**

July seasonally unadjusted unemployment rates were up in 16 of the state's 17 major labor markets, according to data released today by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG).

"Three major events typically occur in Michigan's various regional labor markets in July that produce large changes in employment and unemployment, and this year was no exception," said Rick **WACKLAWEK**, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. "The end of the school year, auto-industry retooling for the new model year and the continued entry of summer workers into the workforce combine to raise area jobless rates."

The size of jobless rate increases by area ranged from a low of 0.4 percent to 1.8 percent. The average rate of jobless gains in the 16 areas was 0.7 of a percentage point. For the state's Upper Peninsula, joblessness actually decreased, albeit only by 0.1 of a percentage point.

There is a sparkle of good news in this month's jobless report, however. The administration reports that compared to July 2004, things are looking up. Over the past 12 months, 15 of the state's major labor market areas recorded unemployment decreases. The largest drop of joblessness came in the Saginaw-Saginaw Township North, Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Jackson and Niles-Benton Harbor metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) with all four of those regions recording declines of one percent or more.

The Detroit-Warren-Livonia MSA posted a marginal 0.2 percent rise in its jobless rate over the year. The rate for the Monroe metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was unchanged over the past year.

In 12 of the state's MSA's labor force levels increased. In five areas, labor force rates declined.

Seasonally unadjusted payroll jobs in Michigan fell in July by 111,000 to total 4,306,000. All metropolitan areas in the state registered large seasonal payroll employment declines over the month.

## **LOCAL JOBLESS RATES INCREASE**

Unemployment went up in 16 of the state's 17 labor areas from June to July, according to the Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

The average increase in the areas was .7 percentage points, but increases ranged from .4 percentage points to 1.8 percentage points.

However, the jobless rates have fallen in 15 of the markets compared to a year ago, the department said.

Monroe saw the biggest increase in joblessness, from 5.9 percent in June to 7.7 percent, 1.8 percentage points up from the month.

Flint had the highest unemployment in the state, at 9.5 percent, up from 7.8 percent in June. Still, the area had a lower unemployment rate than a year ago, when it stood at 10 percent.

Ann Arbor had the lowest unemployment rate at 4.8 percent, up from 4.4. percent in June, and down from 5 percent in July 2004.

Detroit, the largest market, saw its unemployment rate go up from 7.7 percent in June to 8.1 percent. That July rate is over the 7.9 percent unemployment rate in July 2004.

Among counties, Mackinac County – which includes Mackinac Island – had the lowest unemployment rate at 3.4 percent, and Oscoda County had the highest rate of 11 percent. A total of five counties – Gladwin, Alcona, Baraga, Clare and Oscoda – had unemployment rates of more than 10 percent. Wayne County, the state's largest, was touching that level with an unemployment rate of 9.9 percent.

# Area's jobless rate shoots up in July

Friday, August 26, 2005

By Dave Alexander

CHRONICLE BUSINESS EDITOR

Muskegon County's unemployment rate rocketed upwards in July and the gloomy numbers don't even reflect the 720 industrial jobs that three local companies will be eliminating in the coming months.

Muskegon County's July unemployment rate rose to 8 percent from 6.9 percent in June but is still below the 8.9 percent in July 2004.

Muskegon was one of the 16 major labor markets in Michigan that had a higher unemployment rate in July while only one registered an improved employment picture. Only Flint had a larger percentage increase in joblessness than Muskegon while Flint, Saginaw and Detroit had higher unemployment rates in July than Muskegon.

In Muskegon as across the state, the unemployment hikes are being blamed on seasonal factors found each summer, state labor analysts said.

"Although there was a mild increase in employment, unemployment rose significantly over the month," according to Brian Waters, West Michigan regional labor market analyst for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth. Muskegon's overall employment in July was up 400 workers to 86,200, but the ranks of the unemployed rose 1,200 to 7,500 jobless, providing a significant unemployment rate increase.

"The increases in West Michigan's July unemployment rates were primarily due to seasonal layoffs in both auto related manufacturing and the end of the school year, which affects education," Waters stated. "Typically, short-term layoffs occur in manufacturing in July due to annual retooling for model changeover in the auto industry."

Ottawa County jobless rates increased from 5.3 percent in June to 5.9 percent in July but is down from 6.4 percent a year ago. Similarly, Grand Rapids' unemployment rate was 6.8 percent in July up from 6.2 percent in June down from 8 percent a year ago.

For Muskegon County, the other shoe might drop in the coming months. July's rates do not reflect the 365 layoffs announced at Sappi Fine Paper North America nor the 240 pending layoffs at Dana Corp.'s Perfect Circle Division. Brunswick Bowling & Billiards have announced the elimination of 115 production jobs in the next two years.

Of those three major hits to industrial employment in Muskegon, only the initial 50 or so from Sappi have begun the process of filing for unemployment benefits and those workers will show up on the August employment reports, according to Wendy Ohst, manager of the Muskegon County Department of Employment and Training.

Ohst agrees with state officials that the July unemployment hikes are seasonal. She said she hopes that once the Sappi and Dana layoffs start to show up in the labor market, season call back and new job creation will mitigate the affect for the manufacturing job cuts.

"We hope to offset some of those layoffs by the end of the summer season," Ohst said. "But I don't want people to think it is totally bleak out there. There are jobs out there and we have seen some activity in some well paying jobs."

Ohst and others working in the Muskegon labor market find that as Dana, Sappi and Brunswick announce cutbacks other major manufacturing employers such as Howmet Castings, Eagle

Alloy, Johnson Technology, CWC Textron and L3 Communications have been in the hiring mode.

Unemployment rates also rose in the counties north of Muskegon.

Oceana County's July jobless rate was 8.3 percent, up from 6.9 percent the prior month but down from 8.6 percent a year ago. Newaygo County was at 8.7 percent in July, up from 6.7 percent in June but down from 10.4 percent a year ago, while Mason County was at 6.8 percent, up from 6.7 percent a month ago but down from 8.6 percent a year ago.

# Jobless claims are lowest in 4 years

L5J  
8/26

■ Economy is continuing to create jobs, analysts say; only obstacle on horizon is volatile energy costs.

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER  
*Associated Press*

**WASHINGTON** — The number of people receiving unemployment benefits reached a four-year low last week, fresh evidence of a strengthening economy.

The number of laid-off workers receiving jobless benefits averaged 2.58 million over the four weeks ending last week, the lowest four-week average since March 2001, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

For just last week, the number of newly laid-off workers applying for benefits fell by a better-than-expected 4,000 from the previous week to 315,000, the lowest level for new claims since the first week in August.

Analysts said the drop pointed to an economy that was continuing to create jobs.

"The general message from the claims numbers as well as just about every other indicator we have seen over the past couple of months is that the economy is still growing at a very nice clip," said Nariman Behravesh, chief economist at Global Insight, an economic forecasting firm in Lexington, Mass.

So far this year, a strong economy has generated an average of 191,000 new jobs a month, better than last year's average of 183,000. Employers created 207,000 jobs in July, which helped to keep the unemployment rate at a low level of 5 percent.

The overall economy, which grew at an annual rate of 3.4 percent in the spring, is powering ahead at an even faster pace above 4 percent in the July-September quarter, many economists believe.

Forecasters said the labor market will continue to improve as long as soaring energy costs don't jolt consumer confidence.



# Granholt:Skilled jobs are available in Michigan

Friday, August 26, 2005

BARRIE BARBER  
THE SAGINAW NEWS

Beth L. Miller lost her job in April. She's taking job-training classes in hopes of finding work in the state with highest unemployment in the nation.

"No place is hiring right now," said the 23-year-old Bridgeport Township woman, who has a 2-year-old daughter.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholt had a message for Miller and dozens of others who listened to the Democratic leader Thursday in Saginaw: The state has 90,000 employment vacancies. Jobs go wanting in health care and some skilled-trade industries.

"In this global economy, you need to have skills to be able to get a job and stay in a job," she told those enrolled in Michigan Works! job-training classes as they listened inside the Saginaw Valley Rehabilitation Center offices, 310 Johnson.

Granholt, who is facing re-election next year, toured the center during an afternoon visit that brought her face-to-face with dozens of people who have fallen victim to the state's 7.6 percent unemployment rate.

Granholt touted the state-supported Michigan Works! job training effort, part of the MI Opportunity Partnership, that has helped place more than 250 people in jobs in the Saginaw area and more than 7,200 in jobs around the state since spring.

The state has a goal of putting 30,000 people to work this year.

Chad J. Leachman, 32, of Saginaw is among those looking. The Saginaw man quit working for a General Motors Corp. truck plant in Shreveport, La., to move closer to his 6-year-old son, he said.

He's placed his hope in Michigan Works! to find a new livelihood.

"Hopefully, it's going to polish me up and open some doors," he said.

The initiative tries to marry a person's interest with a job best suited for success, said Linda A. Caprathe, director of SVRC Industries Inc. workforce development.

"For so long, the emphasis was just putting them in a job, period," she said.

Granholt also touted her proposed change to the state's Merit Scholarship initiative to give \$4,000 to those who complete two years of college.

The governor drew wide applause from the group when she said she supports a labor-backed effort to put on the November 2006 ballot a proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$7.15 an hour from \$5.15. A state

House Democratic attempt to do the same thing has stalled amid opposition from the Republican-dominated House.

Republicans have strongly criticized Granholm's jobs record as her re-election attempt draws near. "Michigan does face an extra challenge in the global marketplace, but we also face a challenge in competing with other states," said Michigan Republican Party spokesman Nate Bailey.

Many jobs have left the state for South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Canada, he said, adding, "Those aren't places that are paying a dollar an hour for labor."

The state's high taxes and business regulations have added to its woes, the spokesman said.

"These are the kinds of things the governor should be addressing to get Michigan back on track so we can compete first domestically and then globally," he said.

Barrie Barber covers politics and government for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9725.

# **A lovely bunch of coconut puts chef over the top Lively competition tantalizes tastebuds while it raises funds for food bank**

Friday, August 26, 2005

**Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter**

The tropical treat was the "mystery ingredient" that Hindley, chef at Genoa Township's T.W. & Friends restaurant, and Scott Swamba, chef at downtown Brighton's Ciao Amici's, had to use in the "Iron Chef" TV show-style contest as they went head-to-head in a fundraiser for the Gleaners Community Food Bank of Livingston.

"It threw me for a loop," said Hindley, who defeated Swamba by a mere eight points in the competition. "I had no idea what I was going to do, but I guess coconut can be a pretty versatile ingredient."

Though Hindley was picked first by both the audience and judges, he and Swamba agree the real winner of the evening was the food bank, which organized the event to spur public awareness of the growing number of hungry people in Livingston County.

"This drew out the people and I hope it gives them more of an idea of what Gleaners does for everyone in this community," Swamba said. "Getting more people involved is what we wanted to do."

The 28 nonprofit agencies served by the Livingston food bank are seeing a staggering increase in need, and the Shared Harvest Pantry, an emergency food program located inside Gleaners, also has had a 35 percent increase in the number of people coming in for food this year, said Erica Karfonta, manager of operations. Many of those are first-time users, she said.

"People have a hard time seeing hunger when it's not on the street," Karfonta said. "People are so busy constantly having to do, do, do that they don't realize it unless they run into a hungry person needing food."

Those at the event toured the warehouse and pantry prior to the start of the contest. Volunteers, including friends Darlene Drury, Bev Tasker and Kathy Wolyniak, all of Green Oak Township, were happy to talk about what they do and encourage others to join them.

"It's nice to directly help people, and these are the nicest people you'll ever see," said Drury.

"They're just like you and me, but something just happened to them. So many say that when things are going great someday, they'll come here and help someone else."

Hindley and Swamba, friends and former co-workers at Dearborn's Ritz Carlton, entertained the crowd by creating an appetizer, main course and dessert from a common pantry of meats, fish, vegetables, fruit, grains and spices on outdoor grills in about 30 minutes. They didn't learn about the mystery ingredient until the competition started.

Each course was judged by a panel of five on taste, presentation and use of their coconut.

Livingston County Undersheriff Michael J. Murphy knew the outcome was going to be close when just two points separated the pair on his judging sheet.

His nod went to Hindley, though, mostly because of his entree of grilled fresh tuna marinated in coconut milk and ginger and served with mango butter sauce over a bed of mint-infused couscous with fresh asparagus.

"Everything they both cooked was fantastic, but the mint flavor of the couscous was really nice, " Murphy said.

Leanne Smith can be reached at [lsmith@livingstoncommunitynews.com](mailto:lsmith@livingstoncommunitynews.com) or at (810) 844-2011.

# Improve fosterparent oversight

Friday, August 26, 2005

Kalamazoo Gazette Editorial

Computerized criminal records should make it easier than ever to do background checks on those who work with children.

Yet there are repeated lapses that allow people convicted of sex crimes, drug offenses and assaultive behavior to become foster parents and even work for school districts.

Last week, it was reported that the Michigan Office of the Auditor General had discovered that 321 foster parents and another 32 people who live in homes where foster children have been placed have criminal convictions. Meanwhile, Michigan State Police are at work trying to improve a criminal background-check system that failed to identify a convicted sex offender hired by the Charlevoix-Emmett Intermediate School District to direct that ISD's AmeriCorps program.

In the foster care audit, 16 foster parents with criminal records were selected at random to see what kind of background checks had been performed. In 12 instances, there was no evidence that caseworkers had performed those checks.

The response from Michigan Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow was inadequate, in our view. The Associated Press quoted her as saying the audit only reviewed the way the department processes foster care cases and did not demonstrate that any of the 19,100 foster children were in any danger. "We have independent data to show that, overall, Michigan is doing a good job of keeping children safe," she said. The audit also showed that DHS caseworkers made only two-thirds of the number of foster home visits they should have been making.

Seizing on these lapses, state Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, who is chairman of the Families and Human Services subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said he will hold a hearing on the issue when the Legislature returns to regular session in September.

Clearly, the DHS needs help. State buyouts and early retirements have slashed the staff by 30 percent since 1997. Caseworkers are handling 25 to 40 cases each, instead of the 15 that national standards suggest, according to Udow.

The Legislature needs to take a good, hard look at these problems. But Hardiman's committee should not only probe the state Department of Human Services, it also should do an honest appraisal of the Legislature's own budget priorities.

Improvements, however, need not rest on funding alone. Better supervision and training will result in better performance and documentation.

It's important to note that most foster parents are solid, caring citizens. With more than 10,000 foster care providers in Michigan, a few hundred with criminal convictions is not a huge number. But foster children should not be placed in the homes of convicted criminals. Even one is one too many.

**The Herald Palladium**

**August 26, 2005**

## **Michigan to improve foster care screening**

By ANDREW LERSTEN / H-P South Haven Bureau

HARTFORD -- The Michigan Department of Human Services, which oversees the state foster care system, will soon start monthly criminal background checks of foster care providers.

And the more rigorous screening process was in the works even before a recent state audit citing flaws in the system was released, department Director Marianna Udow told The Herald-Palladium at a meeting with her and several Van Buren County Human Services employees this week.

"We are committed to fundamentally improving the system," Udow said. "We need to make fundamental changes in the system. We all want to make it better."

Human Services will work with a state police database to do monthly criminal background check updates on all foster care providers, and the system will start very soon, Udow said.

"This is something we've been working on for a year," she said.

Currently, only an initial background check is done on the foster care providers.

The recently released state audit - which looked at the years 2000 to 2004 - found that 321 foster care providers and 32 other adults living with the foster care children had criminal convictions as recent as two years ago. Those convictions should have prevented the state from placing children in those homes.

The convictions ranged from domestic violence to sexual assault and drug possession, the audit stated.

"I take the audit very seriously," Udow said. "I think audits are very important, and I do think (this) audit will help make our system safer for kids."

But she and the Van Buren County system workers admitted the system will still not be foolproof. For example, the new background check system will not include data from law enforcement in other states, Udow said.

"That's another problem," Udow said. "A national (database) would be a great help."

Older computer systems are also a weakness for the department, Udow said. There are multiple computer systems that are not necessarily connected to each

other, she said.

"That needs to be fixed," she said.

Technology will be used to help improve the system that monitors visits by caseworkers to foster children's homes, which are supposed to be done once a month, Udow said.

But she said that won't solve a bigger issue within the department: the need for more caseworkers. There has been a significant decline in the number of state caseworkers in recent years, by as much as 30 percent since 1997, in part due to an early retirement incentive program, she said.

"We don't always do (the monthly visits), and I do think that's a serious issue," Udow said.

The average caseworker should have 15 cases, but the state ratios range from 25:1 to 60:1, she said.

"Technology will solve the problem of the (ongoing) background checks, but it will only solve half the problem of the visitations," she said.

What is really needed is a 20 percent increase in case workers, from 800 to 960, she said.

The department has been placing more emphasis recently on placing foster children with their own relatives when possible, based on the philosophy that it is less of a shock to live with someone a child already knows and that it should be more beneficial to society. But that shift also brings new challenges.

Of the problem cases cited in the recent audit, more than 90 percent of them involved care by relatives, who are considered unlicensed and do not have the same stringent standards placed on them as licensed providers, Udow said.

"We need to get the relatives licensed," she said.

Van Buren County Human Services Department Director Marc Del Mariani noted that when the agency is dealing with a relative, it may overlook something like a 5-year-old drug conviction. With a licensed provider that would be unacceptable, he said.

"We've worked more to keep (foster kids) with their relatives," Del Mariani said. "There are different degrees of being 'OK'" in terms of ability to be a good foster care provider.



In conclusion, Udow stressed that she thinks overall Michigan's 20,000 foster care children are safe. Ideally, there would be more funding available for early intervention programs that would decrease the number of children in the system to begin with.

"I do think we're keeping kids safe," Udow said. "But we need to do more critical early intervention work."

And in these tight state budget times, the money set aside for such programs is the first to go by the wayside, Udow complained.

"We deal with the crises," she said. "That's shortsighted."

August 25, 2005

## **YOUTH FACILITY REPORT SAYS 'CANNOT JUSTIFY' EXPENSE**

In its annual report on operations at the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility at Baldwin, the Department of Corrections said it cannot justify the cost of the facility to state taxpayers during a period of fiscal distress.

"Maintaining the contract for the operation of MYC is not a benefit to taxpayers," the department said at the end of the report that otherwise listed the number of security incidents, types of rehabilitation programs and numbers of prisoners taking education programs.

A proposal to end the contract the state has with GEO Group Incorporated to run the state's only privately owned and managed prison has been one of the hot button controversies of the 2005-06 budget. Partly in response to the proposal from Governor Jennifer Granholm, legislative Republicans called for closing the Newberry Correctional Facility and Camp Manistique.

The issue of which prison, if any, will be closed remains unresolved as work on the 2005-06 budget continued.

The report acknowledged that the controversy has been very stressful for the community. And the report says the "department does not oppose the continued operation of a facility by The GEO Group Incorporated."

But moving the 480 prisoners now housed there would save "millions of tax dollars," the report said.

"We simply cannot justify continuing to house Michigan prisoners at the facility when there is proven cost savings to the taxpayers of Michigan to bring these prisoners back into available DOC prison beds," the report said.

Otherwise, the report said the facility is in compliance with staffing requirements though there were difficulties in keeping all the positions filled. The report also said that from July 1, 2004, to June 30, 2005, there were 374 incidents described as "critical incidents," as well as 2,437 prisoner misconducts.

The report also said that 183 graduate equivalency degrees were awarded at the prison, and 188 prisoners were completed substance abuse programs.

# **MYCF supporters rally for Baldwin prison, discuss options**

By Tanya Berkebile, Cadillac News

August 26, 2005

**BALDWIN** - More than 550 people showed their support for the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility Thursday night during a town hall meeting, many wearing bright yellow shirts and chanting, "Save our jobs, don't close the prison."

Some held signs saying "save our jobs," "don't take away my mommy's job" and "honor the Baldwin contract."

The seats filled up fast, with hundreds left to stand around the Baldwin Elementary School gymnasium, where the meeting was held, and outside.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm proposed to close the MYCF, along with other prisons throughout the state, to help reduce the deficit in the 2004-05 fiscal year budget. Through hard work from lawmakers and supporters, the prison was removed from the list of cuts.

Lawmakers have their work cut out for them, because they are finding themselves fighting to keep the prison open again due to being a target for the 2005-06 budget.

Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, Rep. Geoff Hansen, R-Hart and Rep. Darwin Booher, R-Ewart were on hand at the meeting. McManus and Hansen gave updates on the budget process regarding the MYCF and told members of the audience a number of ways to have their voices heard in Lansing. Chairperson Deborah Smith-Olson and Lake County Sheriff Robert Hiltz also spoke to the crowd.

"We've come a long way, but we have a long way to go," said McManus. "We must keep fighting, keep the pressure on Lansing. We have to keep sending letters, e-mails and making phone calls."

Hansen agreed and added, "We need these jobs. This is only the beginning of the fight. We have to make sure everyone is heard from."

The speakers went over what the impact would be toward the local economy if the prison were to be shut down.

MYCF is Lake County's largest employer, employing 229 full-time workers. With Lake County being the poorest county in the state, closing the doors would have a large negative impact to residents and businesses.

Local vendors who supply products to the prison, including Country Fresh Dairy, Oven Fresh Bakery, Gordon Foods, Sysco and CVC, would lose thousands of dollars in revenue.

There would be reductions in Commercial Taxable Value, taxes paid to the county, sheriff's department and millage for the educational fund, to name a few.

One increase would be the unemployment rate. There would be 212 unemployed workers to an area that already has a 13 percent unemployment rate.

Booher said he was pleased that the community is so involved and continuing to stay on top of the issue.

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# Judge to hit list kid: Don't come back

Web-posted Aug 26, 2005

By STEPHEN FRYE  
Of The Oakland Press

Mark David O'Berry, the teenager accused of terrorism after he drafted a hit list at his high school, told a judge Thursday that he did not want to be back in court again.

But that wasn't enough for Oakland County Circuit Court

Advertisement

Judge Daniel Patrick O'Brien, who wanted assurances from the boy that he "won't" be back in court again.

So, the judge called the tall and pleasant-mannered 15-year-old up to his bench for a private conference, which lasted a couple of minutes and ended with a handshake.

"You've said some things on the record that impressed me," O'Brien said. "And you have given me your word and handshake that you will make your mother proud."

With that, O'Brien agreed to the sentence, or final disposition as it is called in juvenile court, that the prosecutors, defense attorney and caseworker assigned to Mark's proceedings had all recommended.

Mark will have his criminal record dismissed if he successfully completes terms of his probation, which include continued therapy, community service and involvement in his church.

Mark pleaded guilty to making a terrorist threat in early June after prosecutors received the psychological evaluation, which showed that he was not a threat.

"Every juvenile has a unique set of circumstances," said Assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Keri Middleditch. "We look at each child individually."

Mark's case came to light when his fellow students at Holly High School reporting seeing a list of 11 names under the title "kill list" as well as another four names under a "maybe list" title in mid-March, when Mark was 14. A week later, police searched his home and ordered him to report to Children's Village, where he was held until prosecutors were convinced he was not a threat in early June. He stayed in Children's Village an additional week, so he could finish the school year.

No guns or other weapons were found in his home.

"They reached the right result," said Ryan Deel, Mark's attorney, after the brief hearing.

"Everybody does stupid things. It's what you do after that that determines the kind of man you're going to be."

In court, Deel told O'Brien that Mark was the perfect client.

"In a case like this, what matters is what the child does to impress the court," Deel told O'Brien.

"Mark has made my job extremely easy < the way he has performed. I have no doubt that Mr. O'Berry will successfully complete the consent probation."

Mark will return before O'Brien on Jan. 19 for a review of his probation.

So far, Mark has participated in his church, the Faith Baptist Church in Waterford Township, on a twice-a-week basis, said both his attorney and his mother, Tina O'Berry. He is in its youth group and may even mentor younger members.

"It appears the church has really taken him under their wings," Debbie Bevan, a youth and family caseworker for Oakland County, told the judge. "I think O'Berry understands the seriousness of what happened."

She said that Holly Schools officials have not expelled Mark, meaning that he might be able to enroll in another district. He has applied to Huron Valley schools.

Middleditch asked that school officials update prosecutors after he is enrolled.

Mark has even applied for jobs recently, trying to get work at a grocery store or another similar business near his Springfield Township home. His mother said his work opportunities are restricted because of his age, but she said he is eager to work.

And Mark said that he was impressed with what he had learned in the past five months, going from normal freshman to the front pages and lead story on local broadcast news. Soft-spoken and shy, he has found it difficult being at the forefront.

But when the judge told him that he wanted to hear from him before agreeing to the punishment recommended by all parties, Mark stood up and faced O'Brien.

"I want to change my life around," Mark told O'Brien, "I don't want to be in trouble anymore. I don't want to be involved in the court anymore."

And when the judge asked for more, O'Berry turned to his mother and apologized.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It was a stupid decision. I don't know why I thought of it."

Published August 26, 2005

## **Bill would help nontraditional families Relatives find themselves becoming parents - again**

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

Two years ago, Bev and Tom Powell, both in their late 50s, became parents again.

The DeWitt couple took in three grandchildren.

They represent the kind of nontraditional family that some say is becoming more common - people raising their relatives' children.

Grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins are increasingly raising second families because parents have substance abuse problems, are in jail, are too poor to raise the children themselves, or simply don't want to do it.

Advocates for kinship families are trying to get a bill passed by the Legislature that would financially help people who raise their relatives' children.

Twenty-one states have similar laws.

Now a foster parent raising a child 13 to 18 years old gets almost \$500 a month, while a grandparent or other relative raising that same child gets about \$100, said Ama Agyemang, coordinator for Michigan State University's Kinship Care Resource Center.

"Why not support families instead of putting kids in foster care?" Agyemang said.

State Sen. Irma Clark-Coleman, D-Detroit, and state Rep. Michael Murphy, D-Lansing, have introduced legislation in the Senate and House that would increase payments for relatives raising children to about two-thirds of the rate currently paid to licensed foster homes.

Clark-Coleman, who has been working on this issue for about five years and has seen several kinship bills stall, said keeping kids with relatives would save money in the long run.

And more importantly: It would save lives.

"They would have far less problems with kids running away and getting in trouble," she said.

Clark-Coleman isn't concerned about funding; she said the Department of Human Services could reallocate the money. But she admitted that fiscal concerns could be hindering her efforts.

### **Second-time parents**

### **Kinship by the numbers**

Statewide, more than 70,000 grandparents care for kids under 18.

#### **Ingham County**

- Grandparents with sole responsibility for their grandchildren: 1,351

#### **Eaton County**

- Grandparents with sole responsibility for their grandchildren: 645

#### **Clinton County**

- Grandparents with sole responsibility for their grandchildren: 218

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census and MSU's Kinship Care Resource Center

In Michigan, more than 183,000 children live with relatives other than their biological parents. And more than 70,000 grandparents care for grandchildren under the age of 18, according to the Kinship Care Resource Center.

Many find themselves in parenting roles a second time.

"Now we're paying for baby sitters, day care, things you don't expect to do when you're a grandparent," Bev Powell said. "Trying to get everything done and be there for them - it's hard." The Powells took guardianship of the children after their father, Tom's son, said he couldn't take care of them. At one point, he said he would have to put the children up for adoption. At the time, the son was in the Air Force, stationed in Tokyo and was being deployed to South Korea.

The children's mother, who lived in Japan, couldn't take care of them either, he told them.

"Of course we're weren't going to have them live with some stranger," Bev Powell said.

The Powells were supposed to take care of the children temporarily. About a year later, Tom's son married another woman, had a child with her and, Bev said, "when the time came to take them back, he didn't want them."

The Powells then applied for guardianship.

### **Financial pressures**

The Powells are fortunate. Although Bev has retired, Tom Powell still works as a civil engineer and said he scrapped plans to retire in a few years.

But many others live on fixed incomes, relying on Social Security checks.

Carrie Hattaway, 33, and her husband are raising five of their own children and took guardianship of Carrie's 5-year-old nephew last year when her brother said he couldn't handle raising him.

In addition to having severe behavioral problems and developmental delays, the boy has cerebral palsy.

Hattaway said he has tried to kick out the windows of her car and broke two televisions, but she said she can't imagine sending him to foster care.

"If I can't do it, who would?" she said of caring for the boy.

### **'Single great-grandma'**

Ethel Artis of Lansing, a self-described "single great-grandma," has been raising four of her great-grandchildren for about six years. The kids range in age from 6 months to 8 years.

Their mother is struggling with drug addiction and their grandmother, who has multiple sclerosis, can't care for them.

So the 65-year-old Artis, a retired General Motors Corp. employee, stepped in.

She became a foster parent in 2001, and said the \$48 every two weeks she got per child went up to about \$370.

Before that, she wasn't sure she could afford diapers, clothes or food. But at the same time, she didn't want them in the foster care system, being raised by strangers.

"I'd move to a warmer state and live in a box car, if it came to that," she said. "It gives me the shivers thinking about foster care."

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

### **Learn more**

- A free informational fair for people who are raising relatives' children (for example, grandparents raising grandchildren) will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 10 at Patriarch Park in East Lansing.



- In addition to information booths and discussion groups, there will be free food and entertainment for children, including a moon walk, clowns, a magic show and Latino dancers.
- MSU's Kinship Care Resource Center and the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging are hosting the event.
- To RSVP, contact Ama by Sept. 7 at (800) 535-1218 or [kinship@msu.edu](mailto:kinship@msu.edu).
- Online: [www.kinshipcare.net](http://www.kinshipcare.net)

# Members get new home with help from DHS, Community Action Agency and the tribe

BY BRENDA AUSTIN

When Department of Human Services, Indian outreach worker Sharon Fegan was no longer able to authorize funds for the upkeep of Alan Kiczanski's and Lois Green's home she asked for help.

Help for eight children who all slept in one bedroom and living room on the first floor of a two-story house. Inflatable mattresses were set up on the floor at night because there were bats in their upstairs bedrooms. Holes in the ceilings were plugged with plastic bread bags and the ceiling in the kitchen had collapsed.

Fegan began working with the family in 1992. "The home was getting worse every year and we needed to make sure they were going to make it through another winter," she said.

So, through a collaborative effort between Tony Bosbous at the Community Action Agency, Kelly Smart from Sault Tribe Housing and Sue Williams from the USDA Rural Development Program, the family now has a new home.

Last year Community Action had given Fegan money for a new furnace for the old home and also helped with the cost of insulation, the house had none. "We were burning a lot of firewood in our wood stove but I didn't like burning wood at night because we had kids all over the house," Kiczanski said.

The tribe helped with the installation of new windows and doors. With the roof just about ready to cave in, Fegan asked Community Action for help. "Tony Bosbous told me we shouldn't put any more money into their old home because it was time to replace it with a new one," Fegan said.

"He told me to come to his office and we would talk. He said if I could raise money from somewhere else he would match it, I told him good, I'm not leaving your office until I have some."

Fegan asked Bosbous to call Kelly Smart, home improvement program manager at the tribe's housing department. They put her on a speaker phone and Fegan asked her for \$15,000 plus money



for a septic tank. "Kelly said all the funds were gone for septic tanks but she could give me \$20,000 and the additional \$5,000 could be used for the septic tank," Fegan said.

She then asked Bosbous for \$25,000 who responded that she would have it before she left his office that day. "On the way back to my office I stopped at the USDA rural development office and asked Sue Williams for a one-percent interest loan for the family. They now had \$45,000 cash towards a new home and septic tank and if they could get a rural development loan for one-percent for the remainder of the cost of the home they would be able to go house shopping" Fegan said.

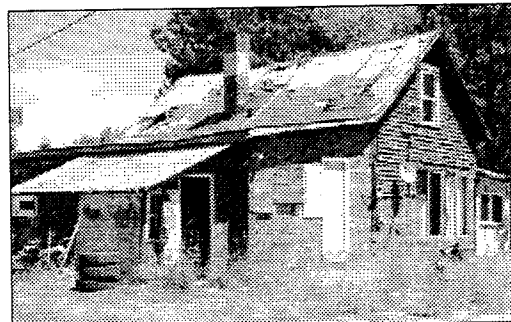
The next day Fegan took Williams to visit the family's

home just past Goetzville, about 70 miles from Sault Ste. Marie, where Williams inspected and took photos of the house. Fegan said, "She told me that in the 35 years she had been working she had never come across a family that needed more help than this one."

That was in September, 2004. Within a week they were approved for the one-percent loan and were told to go looking for a new house.

Alan, who is disabled, borrowed a friend's video camera and went house shopping. Lois is a dishwasher at the St. Ignace Kewadin Shores Casino. So while Lois washed dishes, Alan set off with his friends camera house shopping. With four bedroom modular homes few and far

between Alan was having a diffi-



cult time finding one to fit his families needs. On his way home that evening from Kalkaska he came across another modular sales office. "I decided it wouldn't hurt to stop, I was there and if I just drove by I would never know. I was glad I stopped, they did have a four bedroom house. As soon as I walked into it and saw all the room it had I fell in love with it. It had a day room which we could use as a fifth bedroom," Kiczanski said.

Photos by Brenda Austin

Two stipulations were placed on the homes purchase: Whoever they purchased the home from had to act as general contractor and the home had to have a full basement.

Kiczanski took Green to see the \$119,000 home the following day and said she was so happy and excited she was crying.

The basement was laid last October and while the construction was being done on the new home the tribe moved the family into a house on the Hessel reservation where they stayed for four months. They moved into their new home on Valentines Day, Feb. 14, 2005, with a new mort-

gage payment of less than \$300 a month.

The family received donated furniture from the Endahyon Group Home, which had just closed, and from Kewadin Casino when some remodeling of the second floor was being done. People in the community also donated items to the family. "The little kids are so happy to show me their rooms when I go to visit that they grab me around the legs and just hold on," Fegan said. When the family moved in Fegan bought the children some stuffed animal toys for their new rooms.

The children range in age from 16 months to almost 18.

The new home sits about 75 feet behind the old one which will soon be burned down by the local fire department.

"Everything fell into place, the kids are happy to go to school and happy to come home. We have some yard work to do and next year at this time I hope to have it pretty much done," a smiling Kiczanski said.

Smart said, "I was very humbled to be able to help a family who was in dire need of home replacement knowing they'd never be able to do it themselves. When Tony Bosbous and Sharon Fegan called me, I knew I had to do something. This is what makes my job so rewarding, projects like this. I know I made a difference in someone's life, more importantly those children now have a beautiful home the rest of their lives. Kelly Smart is now the direct assistance case manager for ACFS."

Friday, August 26, 2005

## Some 211 callers having to wait

Chris Springsteen  
*The Enquirer*

Residents using the 211 help line may be experiencing longer wait times than usual, but that situation should be resolved soon.

Staff turnover at the center has resulted in waits averaging nearly 10 seconds, but as long as five minutes, said Nicole Shugars, executive director of the Volunteer Center of Battle Creek, which administers the call center.

However, new staff is being trained and should be ready to take calls starting next week, she said.

"Typically, when we're at full capacity, there's a direct ring into the system," Shugars said. "Part of the challenge is the community is used to dialing and having the call picked up right away."

The 211 call center was created so local people had one location for all social service requests instead of having to scour the community on their own. It handles requests confidentially to steer people toward agencies designed to help a number of different needs, including food, rent, utility bills, prescriptions, emergency shelter, home rehabilitation and medical care.

At full staff, the call center has two full-time staff members and the equivalent of one part-time staffer, which amounts to 20 hours a week. However, one full-time staff member is on maternity leave and another resigned, which left the center's new supervisor to handle the majority of calls.

Shugars said some part-time employees are being trained to be full-time employees and another full-time employee will be coming back from maternity leave in September.

Part of the difficulty, Shugars said, is it's the first major personnel change since the call center opened in 2002.

"We've had virtually no turnover since our inception," she said.

*Chris Springsteen covers Battle Creek City Hall and Emmett Township. He can be reached at 966-0676 or at [csprings@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:csprings@battlecr.gannett.com). Read his blog in the News Extras area at [battlecreekenquirer.com](http://battlecreekenquirer.com)*

# E. C. Beine, 96, Welfare Official, Dies

By MARGALIT FOX  
The New York Times

Published: August 26, 2005

Elizabeth C. Beine, a retired director of New York City's Bureau of Child Welfare, who for more than a decade oversaw one of the largest child welfare programs in the world, died on Tuesday at her home in Manhattan. She was 96.

Susan Vail, a longtime friend, confirmed the death.

Ms. Beine (pronounced BYE-nee) was the director of the bureau, then part of the city's Department of Welfare, from 1962 to 1975. The bureau provided a range of services, including counseling, temporary shelter and long-term foster care.

The bureau became Special Services for Children in 1974 and the Child Welfare Administration in 1989. In 1996 the city established the Administration for Children's Services as a separate agency.

During Ms. Beine's tenure the bureau started the city's first protective-services program, which allowed needy children to receive help at home rather than being sent to foster care. The bureau also instituted the city's first family day care programs, which provided child care at home instead of in an institution.

Elizabeth Charlene Beine was born in Manhattan on July 4, 1909; her mother was a social worker with the New York Mission Society. Ms. Beine earned an undergraduate degree from Hunter College and, in 1949, a master's degree from the New York School of Social Work.

In 1950 Ms. Beine joined the Welfare Department, where she eventually supervised the city's three children's shelters. After retiring as bureau director in 1975, she became an executive with the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.

Ms. Beine is survived by a sister, Deanie Alexander of Manhattan.